

JANUARY 1996



VOL 1 • ISSUE 3

PS•X

THE PLAYER'S MONTHLY GUIDE TO SONY'S PLAYSTATION

Dimension

DEFCON 5™



Data East's Ambitious Deep-Space Adventure!



IN THIS ISSUE:

XO RATED: Thirteen games reviewed, including: *6ex*, *Assault Rigs*, *Doom* and more!

XO EXCLUSIVE: Interplay's award winning shooter, *Descent*!

XO PEGIING: Previews of *NFL Full Contact*, *Thunderstrike 2*, *NBA In The Zone* and more!

XO PORT: Global Gaming: *Ejector*, *Total NBA '96*, *Power Instinct 2* and more!

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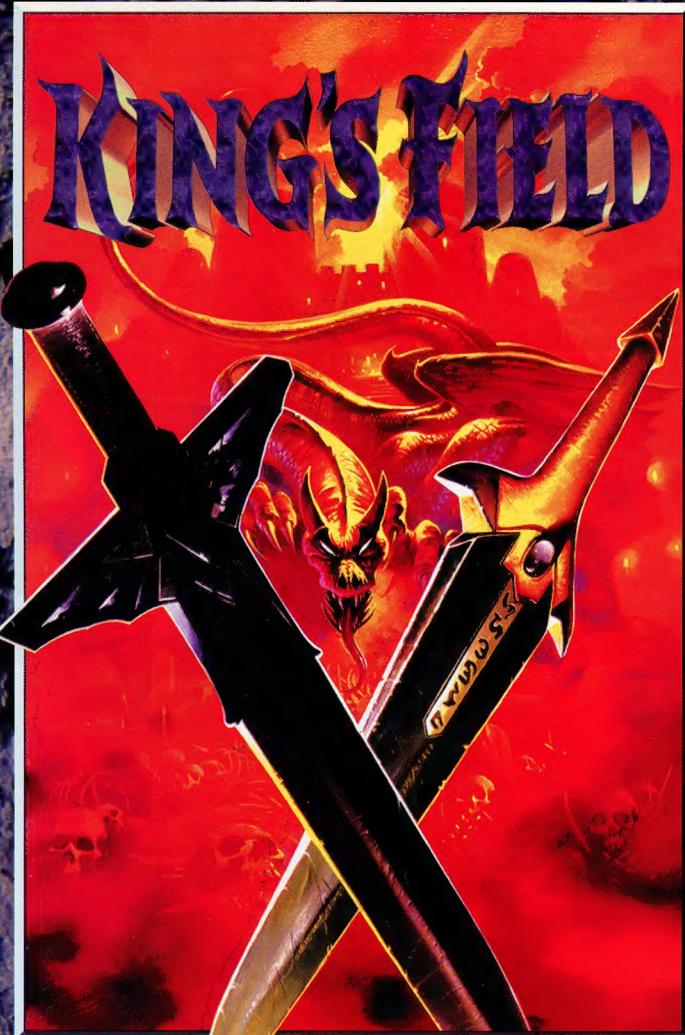
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DESCENT





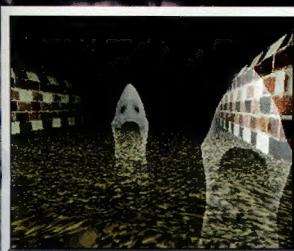
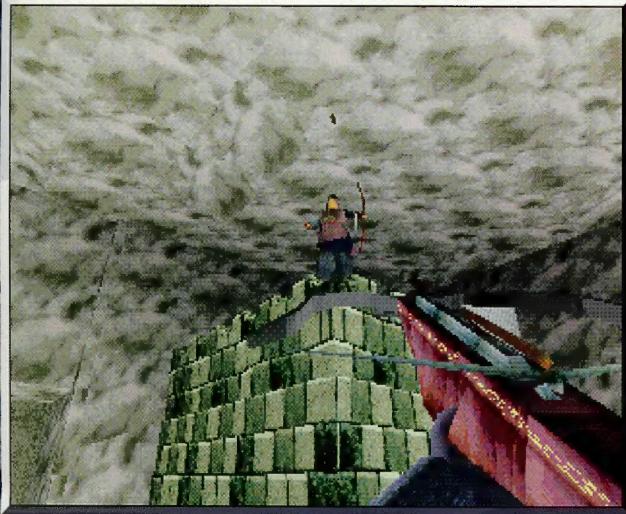
Prepare yourself for an epic action adventure never before possible. Only now, with the gaming power made available by the Sony PlayStation™ is a world as vast and detailed as King's Field possible. Imagine a universe completely rendered in beautiful 3D graphics – in which you can travel freely, being able to look up or down, climb stairs, travel through water, jump off ridges and fight enemies – all real time, all nonlinear. This is the new way to play. As Alexander, destined to become avatar, your task is to retrieve the Moonlight Sword which has been stolen by a cult of insidious worshippers of evil. The cult's ruthless minions can take the form of skeletons, giant octopi, stag beetles, jumbo jet-sized dragonflies, deranged soldiers and many, many others. Your fighting and magic skills will have to be finely honed to take you over mountainous terrain, through rivers and oceans, and into evil infested dungeons. Life isn't all a battle for you either. You'll need a healthy dose of wit and diplomacy to



KING'S FIELD



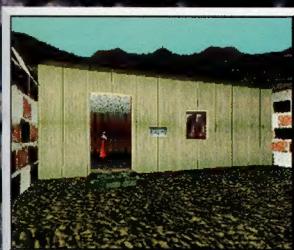
ASCII
ENTERTAINMENT



extract clues and information from the sometimes uncooperative inhabitants of villages that you'll encounter on your long journey. King's Field's rich storyline, complex characters, exciting action and stunning graphics are what put this game in a class all its own. RPG fan or not, you'll be hypnotized by the experience, just as

Japanese fans were. This game alone has boosted sales of the PlayStation™ in Japan. Never before has there been a game that boasts so much excitement and synergy with technology in a single package.

Just look at the awesome screen shots on these pages. There can be no hesitation - go buy yours now!



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- Φ Arcade control (microswitch technology) with 8 button layout.
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PlayStation



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TO ARENA



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Weapon II - Specialized Control Pad

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- Σ Ergonomically designed controller, molded from ABS plastic.
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- Φ Auto/Turbo delivers infinite stream of intense firepower.
- Ψ Slow motion switch and extra long cord.



PlayStation



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VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 3
JANUARY, 1996

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK.

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

X-Cclusive: Page 12

This month, we feature our World Exclusive, First Look, Sneak Peak (pick one) of Interplay's award winning shooter, Descent.

X-Ecute: Page 14

The premiere of Toolie's "Tools of the Trade" features hot tips, hints and codes for Toshinden, Warhawk, Twisted Metal, Ridge Racer and Assault Rigs!

X-Pecting: Page 18

Which one do you want to play first? NFL Full Contact, Thunderstrike 2, NBA In The Zone and much more are featured this month.

X-Treme: Page 30

This month, we take a look at Data East's ambitious deep space adventure, "Defcon 5". Get ready for some more sweaty-palm action!

X-Rated: Page 34

This month, we review 13 new games, including the amazing "Assault Rigs", "NHL Face Off", "Doom" and "Gex" ... another great month!

X-Port: Page 58

Featuring the latest titles in Japan and Europe, including Exector, Power Instinct 2 and Total NBA '96.

IN THIS DIMENSION

third party titles and probably a dozen games total.

As I have been perusing (I hate the term "surfing") the internet, it seems that the majority of PlayStation owners are thrilled with their purchase. If there is one negative theme running through the almost 2,000 current posts on the consumers PS web sites, it is the players' frustration with game delays. This is nothing new. I have been an "early adapter" for every gaming system, dating back to the Intellivision. I can remember, in my first year at Texas Tech, going down to the South Coast Plaza Mall and using my JC Penney credit card to buy "Zaxxon" for the Colecovision ... a full two months before any retailer received the hardware!

My parents bought me the coveted Colecovision for Christmas and I immediately whipped out the ol' fantastic plastic to buy everything that was available, including "Cosmic Avenger" ("Scramble") for 52 bucks! There is no way that a sane, rational human being coughs up that kind of dough for that game ... but I did. Why? Because there was nothing new to play.

Whenever a new system launches, the hardware manufacturer is essentially on its own, in terms of being the primary supplier of software for the platform. Sure, there will be third party support, but the bulk of that will come after the hardware has established itself in the marketplace...usually one year to eighteen months after its introduction. Does anyone remember Sega's launch of the Genesis? Like Sony, Sega was a relative newcomer to the hardware wars (the Master System had seen little market penetration in the 8-bit wars) and there was absolutely NO third party support. The Genesis launched with five titles, in September, 1989. By Christmas, there were a handful of god-awful

As tough as it may seem for PlayStation owners now, things are significantly better than previous hardware launches. And the software flood is just beginning. As of this writing, "Twisted Metal" and "Warhawk" have shipped and "NFL GameDay", "Destruction Derby", "Wipe Out" and "NHL Face Off" are just around the corner. By Christmas, another 15-20 titles should hit retail shelves... more than the average consumer can conceivably play, let alone purchase!

It seems that most of the frustration comes from a promised ship date that has been delayed. Get used to it! With the advanced world of CD-ROM storage comes shorter production lead times. In the 16-bit world, ROM cartridges could take anywhere from 6 to 13 weeks to produce. 50,000 copies of a CD-ROM game can be manufactured in 7-10 days! The developers and publishers are using this time to their advantage and they don't feel as much pressure to make a manufacturing deadline. If there is a last minute bug found in the product, it is much easier (and cheaper) to fix it, thus prolonging the ship date.

For current PlayStation owners, this can be a frustrating experience but one that will, ultimately, be worth it. Eventually, the game publishers will get used to the scheduling changes that are inherent in producing CD-ROM software and they will begin building in a bigger "cushion" in their delivery schedules. (One that will hopefully include time to allow gaming publications to get their reviews out BEFORE the products hit the shelves!) Ultimately, you will find them meeting their dates AND delivering the best-quality gaming experiences possible...you can't ask for more than that!

D. Winding



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NOTES FROM THE (CUTTING) EDGE

DiMeNSiOn Ps-X

I have some questions and comments in this X-Mall ... First of all I am X-tremely happy you guys made a mag just about the PsX ... I mean there are many game systems out there without out a mag because when it comes to games PsX kicks *\$@#%^ ... What I was wondering about is the Mk3 Upgrade for the Arcade. I have heard there are rumors about the PsX getting an upgrade by using its memory chip ... Is this true or just a rumor some Net-Freak started to get people's hopes up ?

Thanx For the Time,
PsX Freak
via the internet

Dear PsX Freak,

We have spoken with Sony about this and they have no news on this subject. However, technically speaking, there's not enough storage capacity on a memory card to hold the data that would be required to do such an upgrade. The only way it would be possible, if it the upgrade was already included in MK3 and the information to unlock it was stored on the memory card. Most likely it is just a rumor.

Dear Dimension PS-X,

Is it true or just a rumor that your mag. will have a PSX Demo CD with each issue?

If not it's something to think about.

Keep up the good work
Chuck M.
via the internet

Dear Chuck,

We haven't made any announcements regarding a Demo CD, so anything you have heard up to now was a rumor. We have talked to a software developer about the ins and outs of producing one. We think it's a great idea but we want to be able to include it with the magazine without raising the price from \$3.99. The biggest hurdles to clear are the production costs and turnaround times involved with making PlayStation CD's, since Sony is the only one that can burn them. We'll be working on it!

Dear Dimension PS-X.

I am a regular contributor to several online games magazines and the Sony PlayStation newsgroups. You should really pay attention to the news-

groups, they are an amazing and untapped source of information regarding what the PlayStation owners are concerned about, what they want to see, etc. If you are interested in a monthly synopsis of what's happening in the Sony newsgroups, e-mail me and let me know, I'd be happy to write it for you. (No charge, I have a great job and I do this just for love of the industry.) Just let me know, I could E-mail you a report every month. Again thank you for your time, and good luck with the magazine. Here is a quick example of what I would like to write for you guys. This is a quick rough version, but let me know what you think:

Here is what's going on on the Sony PlayStation newsgroups:

The month of October in the Sony newsgroups was marred by one consistent theme: DELAYS! Almost half of all posts were concerning why games were being delayed. Most notably, Wipeout, Jumping Flash, and Madden '96. Wipeout was by far the most complained about delay of the month. Adding insult to injury was the posts of the Europeans, who got their Wipeouts at the PlayStation launch over there in the end of September. Questions over the conversion process from PAL to NTSC did not diminish the aggravation over the delayed release. Mortal Kombat 3 was met with mixed reviews on the NFT, along with the SMOKE code being posted a hundred times. More impressive was WWF Wrestlemania, which was praised by almost everyone. Although the fatalities and secret characters have yet to be found, a FAQ appeared only two days after the game's release with all known special moves, character bios, and combos.

In other news, Someone finally cracked the NBA JAM TB secret player file on their PC and released a list of all 53 secret players. The question of whether or not the difficulty modes were mistakenly reversed in the game was never solved.

In a request to find out the average age of people on the newsgroup, it was discovered that 80% were over 20 years old! Although this demographic also includes those people with online access, we still thought it was interesting.

Sony reps came under a lot of fire in the newsgroup this month. Paul Manno, Trish Michelli, and David Gracia were all met with a great deal of flak on line. The reason being that they were very limited in the information they could release and the consumer frustration with Sony's distribution tactics fell on their shoulders.

Other reps like Jay Barnson, who worked on the Twisted Metal and Warhawk development team, were more than happy to answer all questions. Jay even mentioned a mysterious "Kali" code for Warhawk that is hidden in magazine advertisements. Rumor has it that more codes can be discovered through the print advertisements for Sony

games.

Despite the occasional flame war (trading of insults) and the stray Saturn user proclaiming "Sony sucks, Saturn Rules!" Rec.Games.Video, Sony.Playstation, and Alt.Games.Video.Sony remain strong sources for information regarding the playstation. A word of advice for newcomers, don't post anything until you've been around for a few days. Get used to how things work, and pay attention to what's already been posted. If you're asking a question about (for example) Twisted Metal, make sure you leave question marks in your title so people know it is a ? and not valid info.

Now you have a pretty good idea of what goes on in the newsgroups, and what to expect if you join us. I look forward to seeing all of you online! The following is a list of my favorite codes for the month of October that came from the newsgroups. Parodious (Import) invincible: pause game: triangle, triangle, X, X, 0, square, 0, Square, Down, Left, : Unpause game.

Wipeout: (unconfirmed) 1. Highlight one player: press and hold (L2, R2, Left, Start, Select) while holding press X. Accesses Rapier class. 2. Highlight one player: press and hold (L1, R1, Right, Start, square, 0) while holding press X. Accesses Firestone track.

I hope you guys found this interesting. Looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Rex Dickson

Dear Rex,

We'll leave it up to our readers ... well folks, what do you think? Should we make this guy a regular??

Dear Dimension PS-X

I am writing to make you aware that I really enjoyed your November issue, and wanted to tell all those people down at PS central to keep up the good work. I have one question for you guys at Dimension Publishing. In upcoming issues will there be any tips or tricks sections? Your magazine is really cool and hints on the games would really help some of us consumers out.

SummitMik@aol.com

Dear Mik,

You bet! As we grow we'll be adding more and more features and sections. X-Route is our new tips section, hope you like it!



Dear Dimension PS-X,

I'd like to comment on a couple of things about PS-X. First off, I would like to say that I think your mag is awesome, and its just what us PSX owners need. I see that Zach Meston is in the crew of editors... you are lucky. I value Zach's opinions in VideoGames magazine, and am glad to have him on the mag staff. I would just like to say something to Zach: I have the first ever issue of VideoGames magazine. Do you know how much that is worth now? Say hi to Chris G. for me. I love my PlayStation, as EVERYONE else who has one does. I know it has a lot of power, and I think Pygnosis just found out HOW MUCH power it has, because they are delaying their major games for almost a month to possibly improve on them. I have also heard that the PSX video chip was not upgradable, and in the future a 64-bit chip will be designed for it, having something to do with M2 technology...? I think something that could help your mag would be a Reader's Review section, where a couple of lucky readers would get to review one or a couple of PSX games. I would be the head of the Reading Editors. I once asked this to Nintendo Power (blech!), but they said laws stated that they can't do that. You could hold a drawing every other month, and send to the lucky reader(s) what game(s) they review. This would be cool.

Finally, I would like to know if you have any demo versions or pics/wavs for any up-coming PlayStation titles. I REALLY am looking forward to NFL Gameday, and I REALLY would love a demo version. Also, I really don't see why everyone is bagging on MK3 (I know, it's not "new" enough, but that's really just comparing it to MK2... o'mon!). I find Toshinden's got old fast, but Tekken really rules. That is all for now. Just remember, please go dog on all the Saturn owners you know!!

—PSXGUY88
(from AOL)

Dear PRXGUY88,

Didn't GameFan try some kind of reader's review thing? Well... we'll think about it!

Dear Dimension PS-X,

Just got your new mag... think its great, look forward to Dec issue NFL Gameday vs Madden 96, which brings me to my point. DELAYS: my bet is you will not be able to compare the two due to delays in EA SPORTS. Why all the delays? Look at Wipeout. I am aware of at least 2 different release dates (one was Oct 20th and one before that). I don't get it! Same goes for Jumping Flash and many more. I rec'd a letter from Sony saying there were to be 11 new games for Oct. Well, as of today the 27th, we have seen 5. I have called Sony 5 times and never get the same answer twice, even if I call the same day. I have e-mailed Sony 12 times and EA 17 times and never heard a word. Now that's what I call support. You might not know the answer to all the DELAYS, but maybe you could get more answers then we consumers can. Thanks for your help, keep up the good WORK.

David Walther
via the internet

Dear David,

Yikes, 29 e-mail's about release dates! Maybe they're too busy reading email to get their games out! But seriously, we're just as annoyed about the whole release date situation as you! Normally, when publishing software on CD-ROM, it's easy to meet a deadline because production times are so short. However, with the PlayStation, each and every developer has to send their game to Sony for CD-ROM duplication because of Sony's use of a non-standard format. Add this to Sony's strict standards for approval and the delays can snowball. Often a developer will think their game is ready for release, only to have Sony kick the game back for some minor detail. Even in taking a game that has already been released in Japan, Sony of America may object to something Sony of Japan let through and send back the game for reprogramming. This is not necessarily all bad; What Sony is doing is assuring that a quality product is presented to the consumer.

Editor folk:

My compliments. Nice magazine; very readable, very good layout. Nice work. Puts the other PSX specific magazine that I've seen to shame.

—Tyler Yip
via the internet

To the makers of Dimension PS-X,

I've just read the first issue of your PS-X magazine, and I would like to say that it was absolutely X-CELLENT!!!! This magazine was long over due but it was worth it, and you have done an excellent and first class job on this magazine.

There are a couple of reasons why I enjoy this magazine, and if you will allow me I would like to mention some of them. First of all, I would like to say that I like the magazine because it is a PlayStation magazine dealing with the PlayStation games only. I have a couple of other video game magazines that are very good but they deal with all the video game systems and I only own a PlayStation system. So, your magazine is my personal guide to my PlayStation — 100% of it.

Second, in the "X-Rated" section, I enjoy your honest reviews on what games to add to my video game collection and what is trash.

Third, I enjoyed your sections because they all have the "X" theme; I thought that was very creative and first-class. I hope in future editions that you have more "X" themes, even when you put a section for "special moves and strategy moves" for some of the fighting games, I hope that even starts with an "X".

And lastly, with all the pictures, and the set-up of the Dimension PS-X magazine, I would like to say that I have a first-class and a first-rated PlayStation system, and you have created and produced a first-class and a first-rated magazine for it.

X-CELLENT!!!! X-CELLENT!!!! X-CELLENT!!!!

Thanks again for a superb magazine!
Willie Lewis
Milwaukee, WI

We swear we didn't write that one to ourselves!
Thanks Willie, for your enthusiasm, it really makes it all worthwhile!

Dear Editor:

After reading your premiere issue, I immediately subscribed to DPS-X. The magazine has a very clean colorful look that I hope you NEVER change as it stands out from the other gaming magazines!

Sincerely,
Don
Willowick, OH

P.S. The game ratings were right on!!

Dear D-PSX editors,

I picked up and read your magazine last night and so far I like what you're doing. I also noticed another PSX only magazine, but yours looked better so I stuck with it. As nice as your magazine looks and reads, with good length and well done reviews, there is something that could be improved. First and foremost, hold back on the pictures!! There's too many and too big. I don't want another picture mag named EGM3 you know?

At first your reviews seemed short, but when I thought about the lay-out, there's about 2/3 a page length which is quite nice. The reviews are also pretty much on target from what I've played and heard too, which is always nice to know. I can't agree more with the MK3 review. I own it, and don't own Toshinden, but I'd rather have it reversed. Toshinden offers a bit more originality and a new perspective on the tired genre. But, it is easy as mentioned overall. The player character matches in MK3 are easy as cake, but I've only played on Very Easy for difficulty. The big problem I have with MK3 is the player characters are way too easy and then 'smack' the bosses nail you against a wall. I've never been a big fan of the series, and never became a master at any. The new one has more than ever to learn including the combos. I've never liked or got combos in any fighting game, except for Killer Instinct on the SNES, but I feel that combo system was designed for simplicity. Also, most of the fatalities are quite lame and uninspired for the latest MK incarnation. Kabal's "scream of death", while lame, is quite humorous though.

Keep up the good work and I'm sure with a little re-working and reader suggestions Dimension PSX will become a valuable and great mag for PSX owners. Besides the picture cutback, how about an article or editorial of some sort other than just the editor's letter?

Eric Longdin
via the internet

Holy crow! We thought our pictures were the best part! Well, let's hear more from all you readers, should we cut out the pics???

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PlayStation Gaming News

From Around The Globe

PLAYSTATION SALES REACH RECORD HEIGHTS:

October 30, 1995. Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) announced today that they have currently sold 300,000 PlayStations, since the system's launch on September 9th - that's an average of 5,882 systems a day! Additionally, they're claiming high software sales of more than 1 million game titles so far, resulting in an unprecedented four-to-one title per console ratio. "This is phenomenal news ... exciting for everyone involved in the launch of the PlayStation, especially our retailers and consumers," said Jim Whims, Senior Vice President, SCEA. "Several retailers are still in a sold-out situation and demand for software continues to increase as the installed base grows." Several sources indicated. Then, on the day of the launch, hundreds of eager would-be PlayStation owners lined up outside the doors of many of the retail stores selling the PlayStation and it remained that way until the close of the business day. With record sales of more than a quarter of a million units in just over six weeks, SCEA is anticipating that the PlayStation will be this year's leader among the next-generation video game platforms.

According to Peter Roithmayr, Merchandising Director at Electronics Boutique, "The Sony PlayStation continues to be the dominant video game hardware at our stores, outselling the Sega Saturn by far. Every new piece of PlayStation software we get goes straight to the top of our sales charts." Our prediction: Sony will

continue to ride their tidal wave of success, throughout the holiday season and into next year.

CAPCOM ANNOUNCES SIX NEW PLAYSTATION TITLES:

Capcom is making a major commitment to the PlayStation next year, with a slew of quality softs for the first quarter of '96. These titles include: "Fox Hunt" (Jan.) — a great-looking full-motion, interactive spy-thriller spoof that promises to set new standards for its genre, "Dungeons and Dragons: Tower of Doom" (Jan.) - an arcade-perfect translation of their popular multi-player, fantasy coin-op; "DarkStalkers: The Night Warriors" (Jan.) — another one of their amazing fighters, that has already spawned a sequel in the arcades; "Street Fighter Alpha" (Feb.) — the newest installment in the ever-popular Street Fighter series; "Buster Brothers Collection" (Feb.) — see this issue's "X-Pecting" for a thorough preview; and, a game that needs no introduction or explanation, "Resident Evil" (Mar.) — one of next year's most eagerly anticipated and goriest releases.

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT EUROPE INKS Q SOUND DEAL:

QSound Labs has announced that Sony Interactive Europe will be incorporating QSound into ten new titles for the PlayStation, over the next two years, further establishing QSound as the first choice for companies striving to produce the complete audio experience. The

first Q-enhanced PlayStation product will be "Chronicles of the Sword", an adventure game that takes place in the time of King Arthur. Also in development is a yet-to-be-titled Formula 1 racing game expected to debut in April. For those of you not familiar with QSound, it's a "multidimensional sound placement technology which provides an expanded soundfield that requires only traditional playback systems for reproduction". What this means in layman's terms is "really, really cool 3D sound from your TV without shelling out big bucks for a surround sound system". Sony Interactive has joined a growing list of software developers including Activision, Capcom, Virgin and Sega. This contract adds to a growing industry-wide recognition of QSound as integral part of quality gaming on all major platforms and the most cost-effective way to get the very best out of the new generation of 32bit console systems.

LAST MINUTE NEWS: THE 'RASH IS ALMOST HERE!

Just as we were closing this issue, our good friends at EA dropped by



with a, near-complete, version of

X-NEWS

Road Rash. Being one of our all-time favorite games, we just had to find a place to squeeze it in and give you another look at its progress. We're sure the big question on everyone's minds is: how does it compare to the 3DO version? Well, we'll have to leave that for the review; but, to give you a good idea, the version you see here is about 75% complete and it's running faster and smoother and looks crisper and cleaner. This is one PlayStation title you simply



cannot do without ... We'll follow up in next month's issue with a review and you can expect to see Road Rash hit store shelves just in time for the holiday season.

INTERPLAY'S SPORTS LINE NOW A (VIRTUAL) REALITY

Interplay is a company that has been well known for making some of the best and brightest



games around; but, they are not a company you would normally

associate with incredible sports titles. With their upcoming new brand, "VR Sports", they are confident this will soon change. The VR Sports line-up will encompass all of the major sports games in the U.S. including: "VR Soccer" (Feb.), "VR Golf" (Mar.), "VR Baseball" (Apr.) and, ultimately, "VR Pool", "VR Football" and "VR Basketball". What sets their sports line-up apart from all the others? ... Realism. Every VR Sports title will feature a new



technique called "Virtual Field-vision". What this means, to you and I, is that the game is played in true 3D, where you can play and view the action from any possible angle. This is achieved by combining many technologies like motion capturing, 3D mapping, polygon characters and texture-mapped faces from the real players. We will certainly have more on info and screen shots on Interplay's exciting new VR Sports brand of games, in the months to come.



INTERPLAY DOES CYBERIA ON THE PLAYSTATION

Interplay, and a developer by the name of B.Y.C.E., have been hard at work converting the tremendously successful PC game "Cyberia", over to the Sony PlayStation. Cyberia takes place in a future where global terrorists rule and mankind lives on the brink of disaster. It's up to the player to undertake a mission to find and destroy the ultimate doomsday device that has just been



discovered under the frozen wasteland of Northern Russia. To survive, gamers have to fly, fight and think their way through incredibly detailed and graphically stunning environments. Cyberia is billed as a true interactive, multimedia gaming experience, mixing plenty of arcade action and brain twisting puzzles with unique storytelling elements. Although Cyberia won't be officially released until February, we thought we'd give you a little sneak peak.

DESCENT

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY INTERPLAY

One of 1995's best PC/CD-ROM games is coming to the PlayStation very soon and it is the focus of this month's X-Clusiv: Interplay's "Descent". The game's plot finds you in the year 2169, as the top Material Defender pilot for the Post Terran Mining Corporation, on the planet of Pluto. The good folks at PTMC find themselves under attack, at the hands of an unknown alien race. Ultimately, your mission becomes one of search and rescue, as you and your craft (the Syssx PyroGX) explore the depths of the mine and attempt to stop or destroy the threat, before time runs out.

The PlayStation version of Descent features full 360 degree movement in a real-time 3D environment, 30 levels of gameplay, an artificial intelligence system where, the enemies study and react to your tendencies in combat, animated texture mapping and light source shading, luminosity (the lighting effects employed in "Loaded") and all new music, cinematics and CD quality audio, not found in the original PC



version of the game. You can expect that everything that made the original an award winning title will be present in the PlayStation version, plus the graphic FX and CD quality audio that can only be found on the PlayStation.

Interplay's current plans are to release Descent in the first quarter of 1996. More than likely, the game will ship sometime in February (please, no "delayed game" letters...we will keep you posted as the ship date becomes more concrete). Until then, savor these screen shots and look forward to more coverage as it becomes available.

D. Winding



X-CLUSIVE



Welcome to Dimension PS-X's spiffy new column, X-Ecute, in which we supply you, our beloved readers, with oodles of tips, tricks, and codes for PlayStation games. Why? Because, dang it, we care. (Also, because it's kinda what we get paid to do.) If you have a nifty tip or trick that we haven't printed (gulp), send it to our humble publication and you just may see your name in print. No monetary compensation, sadly, although, helping your fellow gamers is reward enough, right? (What do you mean, "no"?)

Battle Arena Toshinden



BOSSES AND SPECIAL MOVES: This spiffy 3-D fighting game has not one, but two bosses. To fight Sho, the second boss, you have to play through the game at the NORMAL difficulty or higher without using a continue. You don't get the game's true ending unless you defeat Sho. You can continue while fighting against Sho; you just can't continue before you reach him. If you play through the game below the NORMAL level and beat Gaia, the game tells you how to do your character's desperation move. If you play through the game and beat Sho, the game gives you a secret move.

PLAY AS THE BOSSES: Tired of having a mere eight characters to choose from? Then you'll be most pleased to know that you can play as both Gaia and Sho. To play as Gaia, do this: at the title screen, when the options are sliding onto the screen, press **Up**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, **□** button. (It's essentially a "fireball" motion to the left.) You should hear the sound bite "Fight!" to indicate that the code worked. At the character selection screen, highlight

Fiji, hold **Up** on the control pad, and press **any** button to select Gaia.

To play as Sho, enter the Gaia code and wait for the game to start demo-ing itself. Press **START** on Controller 2 to return to the title screen. As the options are sliding in, press **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left+□** on Controller 2. You should hear "Fight!" again and the options should turn blue. At the character selection screen, highlight Kayin, hold **Down** on the control pad and press **any** button to select Sho.

ALTERNATE COLORS: Press **SELECT** at the character selection screen to use a character's alternate color scheme.

EASY SECRET MOVES: You can easily do each character's secret move (but are they really "secret" if I'm telling you about them?), if you know the code.

First, enter the codes to play as Gaia and Sho. Wait for the game to demo itself and press **START** to return to the title screen. While the options are sliding in, press **Down**/**Left+□** on Controller 1. You hear the sound bite "Fantastic!" and the options turn white. Now change your control type so that the L and R buttons are set to **SPECIAL**. During a fight, press **L1+L2+R1+R2+SELECT** (yeesh!) to do the secret move.

EASY CONTROLS: Normally, Battle Arena Toshinden won't let you use certain wimpy control configurations on the higher levels of difficulty. Well, we can fix that! First, enter the boss codes and the code for easy secret moves. Wait for the game to demo itself and press **START** on Controller 2. At the title screen, press **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left+□** on Controller 2. "Fantastic!", sez your PlayStation as the options turn yellow. Go to the configuration screen and change the controls just for the heck of it.

STUPID CAMERA TRICKS: You can mess around considerably with Toshinden's "camera", like so: at the options screen, select a control type that doesn't use any of the L or R buttons (A2, for example). There will now be a camera option named **YOUR SELF**. Return to the control type and select A5-G5. During a fight, you can use the L and R buttons to control the camera. But wait, there's more! Pause the game and press **all four circular buttons+SELECT**. The menu disappears, leaving you an unchuttered

view. Press the **four buttons+SELECT**, a second time, to make the energy bars and scores go buh-bye. Now you can use the L and R buttons to pan and zoom the camera. If you have Controller 2 plugged in, press **SELECT** to advance the action one frame at a time. If the 2P control type is set to **CAMERA**, you can use Controller 2 to change the camera angle while using Controller 1 to pan and zoom. You can even move the camera underground and press **START** to resume playing from a subterranean perspective. Press the **four buttons+SELECT** a third time to call up the options menu again.

Mortal Kombat 3



HIDDEN OPTIONS SCREEN: During the MK3 copyright screen, press **X**, **R1**, **R2**, and **START**, one button at a time. At the title screen, rotate the cube to **KOMBAT** and rotate it upward to the mysterious question mark. Press **START** to enter the nifty hidden options screen. From here, you can turn **Smoke** on (in the game, silly), give yourself unlimited time to perform Fatalities, turn on Free Play (unlimited continues) and turn on the Background Select. And for you Shang Tsung fans in the audience, his **Smoke** morph move is **Back**, **Back**, **Down**, **Low Kick**.

ULTIMATE KOMBAT KODE (SMOKE): There's no reason to enter the **Smoke** UKK, if you've sneakily accessed the hidden options screen, but maybe you just want to be different. Fine by me! While the intro screens are being displayed, rotate Controller 1's **control pad** clockwise to make the UKK entry screen appear. Cool deal. Now enter the UKK (010696) as follows: Press **R1** once. Hold **Up** on the control pad and press **△** four times, **□** once, and **×** four times.

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Ridge Racer



FLIPPED TRACKS: If you beat all four courses and "win" the game, return to the track selection screen and check out the four new courses. They might look identical to the first four, but they're not. You have to drive through them in reverse, which is harder than it seems, especially after you've been racing the "right" way for days on end.

EXTRA CARS: The game of Galaxian you get to play, while Ridge Racer is loading, isn't just for nostalgic purposes. If you shoot all of the aliens before the screen fades out, you get a rather swell reward. Go to the car selection screen and check out the eight brand-new cars, for a total of one dozen vehicles. (Make sure to save your best times to the memory card so you also save these new cars and don't have to beat Galaxian every time you boot up Ridge Racer.)

MIRROR MODE: Start a race and drive forward for three or four seconds, then turn around before you drive onto the main track. There's a steel wall directly in front of you; drive through the wall fast enough and you enter the goofy-assed Mirror Mode, in which the track is flipped horizontally. Left turns are now right turns and vice versa. A rather clever way of milking another driving experience out of Ridge Racer's single track, don't you think?

GALAXIAN 13: There's a super-fast thirteenth car in Ridge Racer that can be yours, if you manage several tough feats. First, beat all of the regular and flipped tracks. Start one of the regular tracks and look for a black car near the bridge. This is Galaxian 13, and it's one fast muttha—so

fast, that once it passes you, you'll never catch up. You have to prevent G-13 from passing you at all, by cutting it off at specific points in the track where it tries to make a move. If G-13 slams into your rear bumper, you've successfully prevented it from passing. Keep it up until you win the race. Beat G-13 on all the tracks and go to the car selection screen. Press Left once and G-13 is yours for the driving. Life is good.

Assault Rigs



LEVEL PASSWORDS:

- 1) NEXXTGEN — **□△○△○○**
- 2) THISWAY — **△△○○○○**
- 3) JOYJOY — **△△△△○○**
- 4) NODDY — **○○○○○○**
- 5) WASTELANDS — **△△○○○○**
- 6) VERTIGO — **×○○○○○**
- 7) GEMTOWER — **△○○○○○**
- 8) BRIDGE — **○○○○○○**
- 9) OBLITERATE — **○○○○○○**
- 10) ARENA — **△△△△○○**
- 11) PBM — **○○○○○○**
- 12) PBM — **○○○○○○**

Twisted Metal



LEVEL PASSWORDS:

Cyberia — **○○○○**
 Roof Top — **○○○○**
 River Park Rumble — **○○○○**
 Warehouse — **○○○○**

Warhawk



God Mode: **○○○×△△△**

Level passwords:

Mission 1: **○△△○○○○○○**
 Mission 2: **○△△○○○○○○**
 Mission 3: **○△△○○○○○○**
 Mission 4: **○△△○○○○○○**
 Mission 5: **○△△○○○○○○**
 Mission 6: **○△△○○○○○○**

Destruction Derby



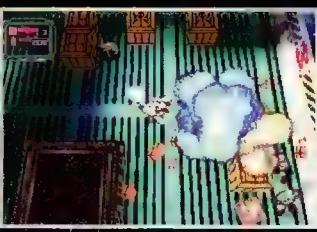
DRIVING TIPS: This ain't no cheat mode, merely a little advice. Tip #1: While the sides and rear of your car can take endless amounts of damage, shown by the damage indicators turning black, your front end (which contains a little something called your engine) cannot. This leads us to Tip #2: In the Destruction Derby mode, after your front end has taken some serious damage, start driving backwards to protect your engine. (You'll notice that the PS-controlled cars also use this tactic.) Driving backwards in a circle is a surprisingly effective way to rack up points, as the PS cars try to hit you and end up being smashed silly themselves.

Send all code submissions to:

X-Ecute

Dimension Publishing
 1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
 Foster City, CA 94404
 or email us at: ds@quake.net

X-Ecute



LOADED TIPS:

- 1) Hold down the ran button to dodge bullets more quickly.
- 2) Only use smart bombs in rooms that contain a lot of enemies.
- 3) Smart bombs do not effect Hunter so do not waste them on him.
- 4) Stand at doorways and let baddies come to you rather than heading on into a room.
- 5) Do not pick up health if you already have 50% or more, you're better off saving it and coming back to it when you have killed more of the enemy.
- 6) Be careful of flamer robots as they can do a lot of damage up close.

- 7) Always look for cracks in walls that lead to secret rooms as these contain useful pick-ups.
- 8) The strafe button works very well to side-step bullets and other baddie's attacks.
- 9) Using the strafe button to walk backwards and fire is a good form of attack.
- 10) Use ammo sparingly, don't just run round a level with the fire button held down continuously.
- 11) The end of level 1 has a high concentration of guards so get your smart bombs ready.
- 12) Look out for the secret rooms on level 2.
- 13) Don't hang around on levels 3 and 4 as the monsters regenerate.
- 14) Be careful not to hang around on level 7 as the zombies regenerate.
- 15) Look out for the hidden rooms on level 8.
- 16) Get fully powered up for Hunter who is at the end of levels 8 and 9.
- 17) Do not pick up all the power-ups at once at the end of level 10.
- 18) Go to the left side of level 11 first to get the first two parts of the bomb.



- 14) Get prepared for Hunter at the end of level 8.
- 15) On level 6, the fuel is hidden next to four huts.



- 21) Find the out door teleporter to get an extra life on level 12.
- 22) Be careful not to rush into the rooms that are full of robots on level 13.
- 23) Do not pick up all the power-ups in the room before F.U.B. unless you need them. Wait until you die and then power up again.

Cap-n-hands

Prepare for complete testosterone pumping mayhem!

— Diehard Game Fan



When I find F.U.B.
the gamma planter
in his liver will
pump his
body with
energy



Create Huge Explosions

fully charged shotgun...
just alter the
bullet's path
and the
shot will
hit the target



15 enormous
levels to explore

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WEAPON OF CHOICE: Flintlock
WEAPONS: Blaster, Buckshot

KILLER: Fire up double shotguns and keep
enemies at bay with long range attack.

RESIDENT EVIL

CAPCOM • AVAILABLE JANUARY

We couldn't help but reveal a little more information and screenshots from Capcom's horrific "Resident Evil", one of the most eagerly anticipated PlayStation games yet. The story sets you deep in the hills of a secluded countryside, in the American mid-West, where the government has been secretly conducting bio-technology experiments, in an abandoned mansion. All communications with the mansion have been mysteriously cut-off and now it's up to you and your team mates, as members of S.T.A.R.S. (Special Tactics And Rescue Squad), to investigate this potentially dangerous situation, survive long enough to figure out what's going on, and escape with your lives. Resident Evil captures the drama and suspense of a true horror film, through an ominous and macabre environment. Your character is comprised of highly detailed, texture-mapped, polygons and is seen through a variety of shifting, third-person "camera angles", similar to that of the "Alone in the Dark" series. Your quest involves surviving several encounters with neck-biting zombies, giant spiders, grotesque frog-like creatures and a host of traps, hazards and pitfalls that take place across a number of various areas. Stay tuned, as we should have the review on this "bloody great" game sometime in the next few issues.



XPECTING



Butch

Man! I **hate** EUB.
I'm gonna dress
him up in
a hideous day-glow
mini-skirt.

Zoom In & Out Of Action

paint his toes
violet, and
call him "Dolly."
Then I'll
taste him.

Features Music of
Pop Will Eat Itself

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KILLER TIP: Fights best against the topas.
Back into a corner and now... aim down.

THUNDERSTRIKE II

US GOLD • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

In US Gold's "Thunderstrike II", you climb aboard one of the military's most advance attack choppers and take to the skies for fierce, realistic arcade combat. From just the early demo versions, that we've received so far, it is clearly evident that this is going to be an amazing shooter. Thunderstrike II is presented in a first person, 3D, texture-mapped environment that propels you right into the heat of the action. You can choose among a variety of perspectives in which to do battle, including a "virtual cockpit", where it's possible to rotate your position of viewing through 180 degrees left and right, independent from flight direction. What really makes this shooter stand out, is its amazing graphics. The surrounding terrain is unbelievably realistic, rendered seamlessly in thousands of colors and all of the objects and enemies are modeled and rendered to simulate today's military hardware. Thunderstrike II offers ten incredible campaigns that span the globe, from gun-running in South America, to piracy in the South China Seas, a total of 37 massive missions in all. Expect to see Thunderstrike II at your local retailer in February and look for a complete review in our February or March issue.



XPECTING

GOAL STORM

KONAMI • AVAILABLE NOW

Konami has its guns loaded with a new line of sports games aptly titled, "Konami XXL Sport Series", hitting stores between now and March of '96. *Goal Storm*", due out sometime this November, is Konami's first official entry, under this label, into the PlayStation sports arena, with "NFL Full Contact" and "NBA In the Zone" not too far behind. Claiming to be "the most realistic soccer simulation ever released on the PlayStation...period", *Goal Storm* uses three-dimensional, motion captured, polygon characters instead of the standard bitmapped sort, resulting in natural, ultra-smooth animation, as well as an adjustable camera for a variety of different

playing perspectives. Although lacking an official FIFA license, *Goal Storm* offers 26 similar teams, with similar colors, plus a World Cup tournament mode. Some of the other highlights and features that Konami is hoping will position *Goal Storm* in a category of its own are: adjustable weather conditions, multiple

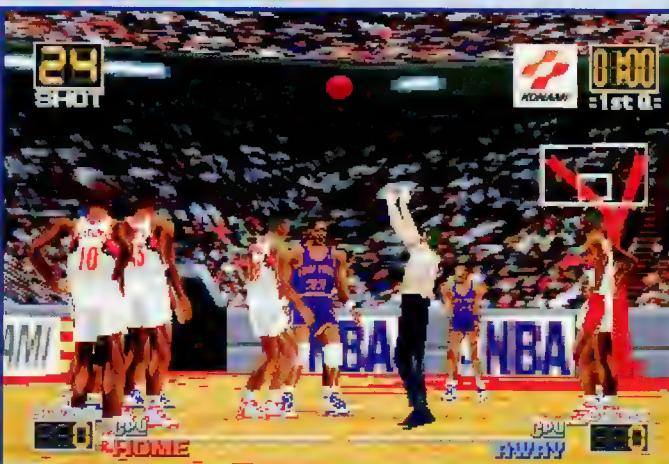
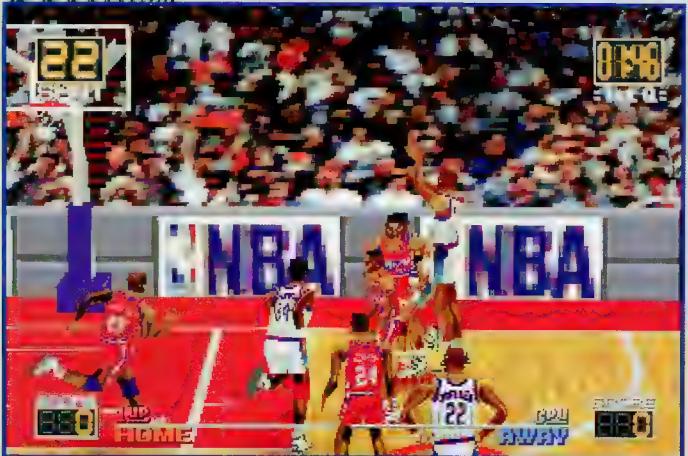
stadiums, a host of realistic tactical options, crisp, colorful graphics, atmospheric sound effects and ultra-tight controls. With a little luck, we should have a complete and comprehensive follow-up review in our next issue.



NBA IN THE ZONE

KONAMI • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Due out sometime this December is Konami's amazing basketball game, "NBA In the Zone", and from what we've seen so far, it's readily apparent that Konami has taken their proven programming excellence - in the arcades and at home - and put together one of the fastest and most realistic 5 on 5 basketball games ever produced. As is quickly becoming the standard, in both sports and fighting games, the characters are comprised of real-time, 3D texture mapped polygons - providing a strikingly realistic and fluid 3D gaming experience. There is also a variety of user selectable camera angles which provide the player with multiple perspectives. Along with all 29 NBA teams and players, NBA In the Zone has all the offensive and defensive moves you'd expect from a true simulation, including behind the back dribbling, no look passing, pivoting, fake shots, stealing, and blocking, as well as specialty moves which include rebound dunking (tip-jams), fade-away shots and alley-oops. We'll keep you posted with all of the up to date information on In the Zone as it becomes available.



XPECTING

NFL FULL CONTACT

KONAMI • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

We are breathlessly anticipating the release of Konami's "NFL Full Contact". The game is being designed under the supervision of one of the original "John Madden Football" team members. NFL Full Contact will feature a unique "Player's Perspective" that brings to life true first-person sports gaming. You see and play the game as the quarterback, running back, receiver or defensive lineman would see it, from an on-the-field perspective. In addition, according to Konami, the game will feature real-time SGI rendered graph-

ics, every NFL player, motion-captured player graphics, all 30 NFL teams, over 90 specific player behaviors, full player and team statistics and multiple viewing angles. They are also dedicating themselves to the task of creating a superior artificial

intelligence engine. Hopefully, we will be back with a review next month and let you know if they have succeeded. Look for NFL Full Contact to hit retail just before Christmas.





Team

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REALISTIC PHYSICS
OVER 90 SPECIFIC
PLAYER BEHAVIORS



HIGH STEPPING
PERSPECTIVE
PLAYERS

A collage of three images. The left image shows a man in a suit and tie, looking down. The middle image shows a woman in a red dress, sitting and looking towards the camera. The right image shows a man in a suit and tie, looking down. The images are framed by a dark border.

"NBA IN THE ZONE"

S-ON-S ACTION
VILLEY-GOP DUNKS
BEHIND THE BACK
DRIBBLING
REBOUND DUNKS
MULTIPLE
PERSPECTIVES

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FULL SEASON
AND PLAYOFF MODE
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PLAYER STATS
FATIGUE FACTORS
FADE AWAY IT'S

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48

MADDEN 96

EA SPORTS • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

After running some initial coverage of Madden 96, in our December issue (from stock photo's provided by EA Sports), we finally received a semi-playable version of the game this month. Although still in the very early stages (no matter what you may have heard or read, Madden 96 will not be out until either just before Christmas or slightly thereafter), it is evident that EA Sports' focus is on the multimedia aspects of the game. Madden 96 is attempting to bring the complete broadcast experience home, with Pat Summerall, John Madden, James Brown and Leslie Visser represented in the game. Gameplay is too early to comment on, at this time, but the design team has opted for large characters in the PlayStation's high-res mode. (The characters are so large, in fact, that you can read the numbers on their jerseys.) We are currently hard at work trying to obtain a reviewable version of the game and hope to have that review in our February issue.



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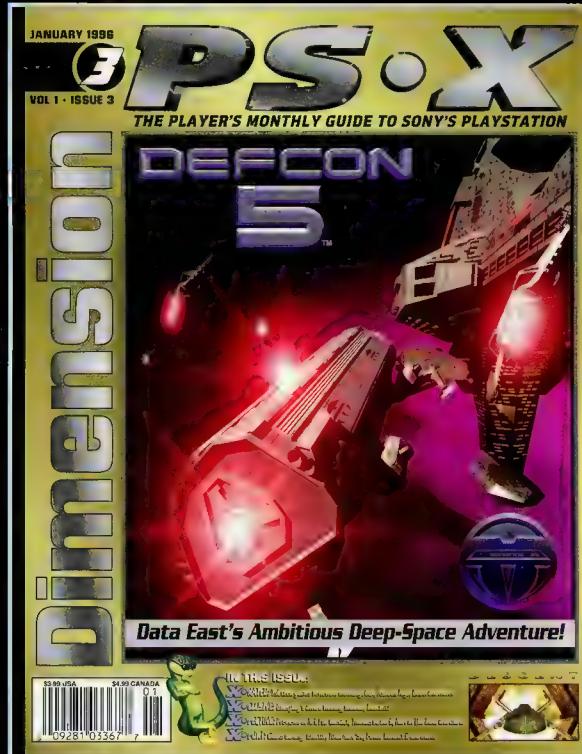
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Volume 1 • Issue 4 • On Sale January 23, 1996

BUSTER BROS COLLECTION

CAPCOM • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

In a somewhat strange, but certainly cool move, Capcom has decided to assemble all three of their popular Buster Brothers arcade games and release them on one CD, titled (incredibly enough) "Buster Brothers Collection". For the low suggested retail price of \$49.99, you get the original 1990 arcade game and two more Buster Brothers arcade conversions released solely in Japan. If you're not familiar with Buster Brothers, it's basically a puzzle game with an action twist. The sole object of the game is to shoot wave after wave of falling balloons with your rope gun as they bounce around the screen. It sounds so simple, but there's a catch. Every time you shoot a balloon, it splits into two smaller, faster balloons, which split again and again and again ... get the picture? The end result, to all this frantic action, is a fun and addictive game that almost anyone can pick up and grasp right away. Buster Brothers Collection features one or two player mode (two player simultaneous), Panic Mode (high-speed balloon busting), Tour Mode (bust balloons across the globe) and Story Mode (play as a balloon bustin' jewel thief) and will be available first quarter '96.



XPECTING

ZERO DIVIDE

TIME WARNER • AVAILABLE NOW

In a remarkably brilliant move, Time Warner Interactive has locked up an agreement with Japanese development house Zoom, to publish the current number one 3D fighting game in Japan, "Zero Divide", this November for the good ol' U.S. of A. The buzz about this fighter has been incredible and it is well deserved. Zero Divide delivers a powerful fighting experience with its combination of breathtaking texture-mapped polygon graphics, a unique cast of robotic fighters, innovative moves, an intricate combo system and exacting game control. Some of the features you'll find



in this one-on-one fighter are: true tinted, light-sourced shading, "ringouts" (in which characters can hang off the side of the ring, when knocked out, then jump back in), four separate, adjustable perspectives, 360 degree mobility (similar to the dodging in Toshinden) and

recordable instant replays that can be saved to the memory card. How does it play? Well, you'll just have to check out next month's "X-Rated" section for all the details.



DEFCON 5

PUBLISHED BY DATA EAST DEVELOPED BY MILLENIUM

Data East's "Defcon 5" is one of the most unique and inventive games coming to the PlayStation this year, and it certainly has one of the most compelling stories. This outer-space adventure, developed by Millennium Interactive, finds you trapped on MRP-6F (Mining Resource Planet), a space station and mining colony that is part of the Tyrion Corporation's defense system. At Tyrion corporate headquarters, they have just executed massive defensive budget cuts. All of the planets, with their defense system under contract to Tyrion, has been targeted for complete withdrawal by Tyrion.

Your boss, Commander Pitts, Tyrion's director for MRP automation, has been killed while departing MRP-6F and, as his second in command, it is your duty to update the colony's software systems to completely automate the mining facility's defenses within 60 days. There is only one problem, in an era where peace reigns in space, someone or something has ordered a massive attack on MRP-6F that begins as you arrive. If you don't have the software systems up and oper-



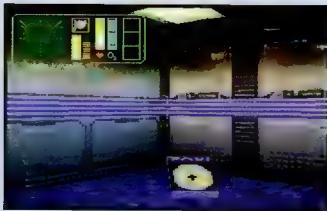
ational, and make your escape within 48 hours, you will perish.

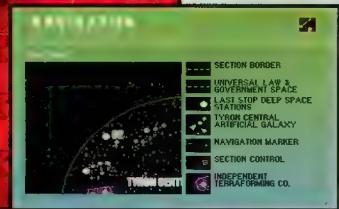
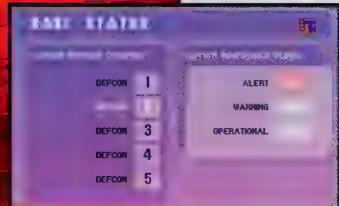
The best way to describe Defcon 5 is as a real-time, 3D role-playing game. You are on a very restrictive time limit within the game, and every movement or decision that you make has an effect on that ticking clock. The basic objectives are to report to the VOS terminal at the beginning of the adventure, get your mission briefing and then act as sort of a conductor of your surroundings.

You must activate defense systems when under attack, man gun and missile turrets (this part of the game is kind of like a 3D "Missile Command"), deploy reconnaissance and combat droids, and wander the first-person corridors of the mining planet's facilities, looking for the various PAD's that you will need to escape the planet. Some of these can be found within the walls of the administrative and domestic buildings, and some must be acquired by shooting down fighters as they attack your outpost. Once the appropriate PAD's have been secured,



X-TREME





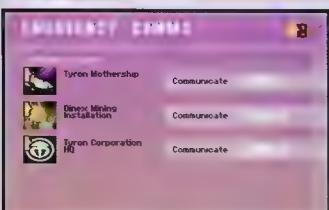
you can activate the system's self-defense mechanism and catch the last shuttle off of MRP-6F.

The central core of the game is, however, the VOS located in the control room (hint: it can be found off of an elevator on level 6 of the admin. building). If you don't quickly get access to this room, it is automatic game over. The VOS is the hub where most of the activities mentioned above are accomplished, and where you will ultimately activate the self-destruct software.

At the core of what makes Defcon 5 work is a seamless, Hollywood-style presentation that makes itself known as soon as the game's introduction begins. I found myself following the story setup intently and I quickly became absorbed in the intrigue of the plot. Once the intro is finished, you are dropped in the thick of things on level 2 of the administration facilities and you are on your own, with the exception of your emergency communication links to Tyron HQ, the mining operation and your operative.

One of the coolest features of the game is the verbal warning system that gives you direction in the game. It is almost spooky when this subdued, mechanical, female voice implores you to accomplish a certain task, or to warn you of impending trouble. And, eventually, there will be a lot of it, as the waves of fighters attack your base, some

XTREME



will get through and the next thing you know, there will be "Berserkers" roaming the hallways, looking to end your existence.

The game really is a lot like a movie, starting out in a discovery mode as you look for information and clues within the admin, domestic and service areas and then slowly building to a fever pitch as the Berserkers attack and break through your security system while you try to make your escape. The Berserkers know your location and will actually follow you through the facility...even up and down elevators! In addition, the more Berserkers you destroy in a given area,

the more poison that is

released into the oxygen supply, thus compromising the air quality of a room or level. The key is to lock certain doors (through the VOS) so that the Berserkers are isolated from key areas (like the control room).

In terms of the graphic presentation of gameplay, it is merely O.K.. And the control is a little sloppy as you try to shoot down fighters from a turret or try to call an elevator. (This can be irritating at times, especially when robo-voice has detected all kinds of nasty threats to your continued use of oxygen!). But the overall believability of the environment is outstanding and the depth of the role-playing experience will have even the most experienced gamers giving the game a good 40-50 hours of playing time before they can escape MRP-6F. Defcon 5 probably won't appeal to the die-hard action gamer as much as it will the sci-fi or role-playing fan, but it is a great game that will reward all those who persevere with an exceptional story and deep, involving gameplay.

D. Winding

The Bottom Line...

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91%



ASSAULT RIGS

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY SONY

Psygnosis' "Assault Rigs" is a direct descendant of the classic Atari 2600 game, "Combat". You remember that one, don't you? It was the game that came built-in to the system, with about 140 levels, or some outrageous number like that. Like many first generation 2600 titles, it was nothing more than "Pong" with different packaging and a slightly different theme. The thing is (and I recently whipped out the ol' 2600 to prove this to myself), the gameplay is still fun, addictive and frustratingly good. The game just needs some 32-bit cosmetic surgery.

Ah, but this is where Assault Rigs comes in. Graphically, it is like adding the movie "Tron" and a little "Doom" to this tried-and-true gameplay theme. In fact, it seems like the good folks at Psygnosis were painfully aware of this potential comparison. The introduction to Assault Rigs features a tour down arcade memory lane, beginning with a Pong machine! Assault Rigs has some serious texture mapping going on as you pilot your futuristic tank through an insane number of levels. There are stationary, ground-based and flying enemies that stand in your way (and that serve as your chief form of entertainment...blasting without guilt or pain),

Distribution by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe.

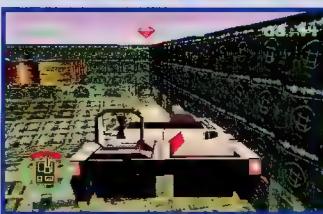
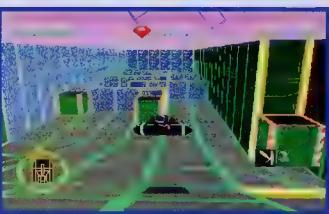


Published and Developed by Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe
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as you try to secure all of the gems scattered throughout the game's many levels. There is also a vertical element in the game in that there are platforms and elevators that will take you up, over and down to the different sectors of a given level. There are a number of shield power-ups and weapon power-ups that can be found as you make your way to a level's exit (which can only be accomplished after you have found the gems), including homing missiles, chain guns, scatter ammunition, bounce ammunition and the like. The best way to play AR is to blast and explore carefully. Liberal use of the Δ button will help you negotiate tight turns, and position your craft so that you can speed toward the next enemy or gem. Initially, you can choose between three dif-



X-RATED



ferent tanks, with more becoming available as you progress through the game. In addition, a number of views are available in the game, including cockpit (actually, more like "windshield"), behind the tank-close, behind the tank-far, and two different overhead views. Also included for the price of admission is one of the coolest soundtracks this side of "Return Fire" (on the 3DO, for those of you that don't own one or that aren't related to Trip). You Gen-X types oughta dig this; a complete '90's version of a decidedly '70's score, complete with some "Frampton Comes Alive" type tracks, mixed in with some good old fashioned Disco. (I never, ever, in my wildest dreams imagined using the words "good" and "Disco" in

the same sentence.) In fact, there is this one track, I believe it is titled "Achtung", that is a wah-wah guitar fan's dream come true... U2 and Kool and the Gang on the same stage!

All humor aside, *Assault Rigs* is just plain fun. No noble, save-the-universe type goals, nothing particularly deep about it, just a great, hide-and-seek shooter that will keep you entertained on those long winter nights that lie ahead. As an added bonus for those of you that might be a little older and slow of finger, we offer you a little help; the passwords to the first 10 levels of the game (they can be found in our "X-ecute" column)...enjoy!

D. Winding



The Bottom Line...

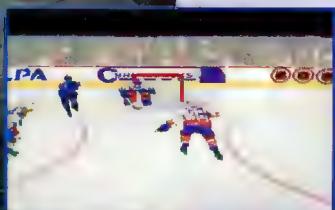
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94%



NHL FACE OFF

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY SONY INTERACTIVE SPORTS



I am what you might refer to as a hockey novice. As a kid growing up in northern California in the mid-'70's, there was no local team (the California Golden Seals had left for greener pastures in 1972-73), watching the game on TV was boring and I never quite got the bug for the sport.

Two years ago, I saw my first game in person, the LA Kings and Wayne Gretzky...I was hooked. Everything that was missing from the game on TV was there in person; speed, passing, control, drama and intense, physical action. Since that time, I have casually played all of the major hockey releases for console and PC. Now comes the first major hockey release for the PlayStation, Sony Interactive Sports' "NHL Face Off".

Let's begin our evaluation by looking at the many features that are at the heart of the product. In NHL Face Off, the player has the ability to compete in full season play with all 26 of the teams (including the Colorado Avalanche) and with both NHL and NHLPA licenses. The game also features player cards, trading and free agent signing, the ability to create players, then sign them through the free agent pool, multiple levels of difficulty and period lengths that can

be customized, team, season, league leader and player statistics, all of the home rinks, with rendered logos and the home team organist, manual or automatic line, 4 different playing perspectives, including a VERY impressive "Ice Cam" view and a detailed instant replay system featuring multiple camera angles, including six different goalie views that are great for viewing that quick wrist shot into the back of the net. In addition, the player can choose to have penalties and icing on or off and whether or not to take manual control of the goalie (or to pull him from the net). Gameplay-wise, NHL Face Off allows the player to execute five different types of checks, including poke, cross, hip, shoulder and slashing, and, on offense, allows for one-timers, slap shots and wrist

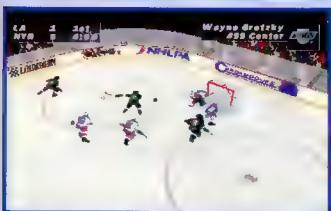


X-RATED



shots.

For me, the best part of Face Off is the real-time 3D environment that is also the cornerstone of Sony Interactive Sports' "other" new title, "NFL GameDay". In almost every real-time hockey game I have played to date, there is that delayed response feeling that you get when trying to execute an active player switch, pass or take a shot on goal. In Face Off, there is no such feeling. Player movement in the rink is fast and fluid, and button response is immediate. The free-floating camera moves in and out, while following play from its multiple angles. The camera zooms in for face-offs, then pulls away as action begins, and none of this has any negative effect on



The Bottom Line...

Sony Sports is two-for-two. First, the best football game I have ever played, and now a hockey game that is both ground-breaking in its advanced 3D presentation, and with gameplay that goes head-to-head with the king of the ice, EA Sports' "NHL Hockey" series. John Smedley and his team at Sony's San Diego offices are to be commended for producing an amazing game that is at once addictive and extremely fun to play.



D. Winding

THEME PARK

PUBLISHED BY ELECTRONIC ARTS DEVELOPED BY BULLFROG

If you partake of the occasional computer game, you're guaranteed to have played something created by the British lads at Bullfrog. These guys burst onto the scene with a quirky little "god game" called "Populous" in 1989 — quirky enough to sell three million copies in various formats. Bullfrog followed up Populous with a string of hits for the PC, most recently the very spiffy (and soon to be on PlayStation) racing game "Hi-Octane", but "Theme Park" wasn't one of them. So why is EA porting it to the PS? 'Cause at this early stage in the life of the PlayStation, you game-hungry suckers will buy anything.

The first in Bullfrog's "Designer Series" of simulations, Theme Park makes you a Walt Disney wannabe with the goal of building the most popular and profitable park on Earth. You start by choosing a location for your park on a map of the globe. If you build near a big city, you'll draw huge crowds, but pay through the nose for the land; if you build in Timbuktu, the land is dirt-cheap, but you have to spend major fundage to make your park interesting enough to attract the fickle public.

With your location chosen, the construction begins. You single-handedly build the park and place all the structures: walkways, stack

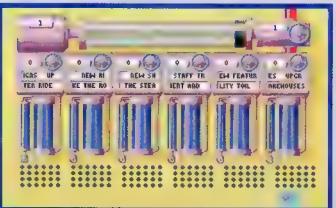


stands, sideshow attractions, bathrooms, trees, and the rides themselves. Some rides are self-contained units of joy, which you simply drop into your park. Other, user-definable rides — roller coasters, monorails, race cars — allow you to construct the ride paths yourself. The most enjoyable moment in Theme Park is building a coaster with a multitude of corkscrews and loops.

Unfortunately, things start going very wrong almost immediately after you open the park. Put the food court too close to the rides and watch your patrons barf their guts out; fail to hire enough security guards and watch the park become a hangout for Hell's Angels; fire the mechanics and watch as rides burst into flames and explode (which would be very cool rides, but I digress). To "win" in the game,



X-RATED



you have to overcome these little hassles and make your park superior to as many as 40 rivals in six categories, including Most Exciting Park, Most Amenities, and Customer Satisfaction.

But I happen to be one customer—well, okay, weaselly reviewer—who's not satisfied with *Theme Park*, because there's just too much going on, and going wrong, at once. The game play forces you to continually scan the park and anal-retentively examine every ride, shop, and concession stand. The classic PC game *SimCity* struck a balance between managing your city and watching the results, but *Theme Park* goes way overboard on the management side. It also seems impossible to please the customers no matter what you do, which makes

the game even more frustrat-



The Bottom Line...

The verdict: *Theme Park* is a strategy game with too much of a work/reward ratio: you spend huge amounts of time micromanaging your park and not enough time enjoying it. If you're truly in the mood to buy a PS strategy game converted from the PC, I'd check out MicroProse's more enjoyable (and more violent) *X-Com* before this.

73%



Z. Meston

ing. The most fun I had was playing at the easiest of the three difficulty levels (which removes most of the management features), but even that got frustrating and repetitive in a hurry.

The graphics in *Theme Park* are sufficiently cutesy, from the 3-D rendered intro sequence to the angled-overhead view in the game itself, but look pretty much identical to the PC version. They've also added a unique-to-the-PlayStation-version first-person mode where you can walk around the park to see how things look from the customer's viewpoint. There's also a feature that lets you "experience" each ride by watching a 3D animation from the rider's perspective; fun the first time, useless thereafter. The sound effects and music are instantly forgettable, much like any Jean Claude Van Damme movie. (Wait, I take that back; *Bloodsport* was a decent flick.)

The verdict: *Theme Park* is a strategy game with too much of a work/reward ratio: you spend huge amounts of time micromanaging your park and not enough time enjoying it. If you're truly in the mood to buy a PS strategy game converted from the PC, I'd check out MicroProse's more enjoyable (and more violent) *X-Com* before this.

CYBERSPEED

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY MINDSCAPE



that it IS Wipe Out but, after scratching the surface, we were able to find the heart and soul of CyberSpeed.

What is it with European developers and the recent flood of futuristic/hovercraft/racing/combat games? They are cranking them out like they are soon to go out of style. Mindscape's "CyberSpeed" is very much in the vein of other games in this category, such as Bullfrog's "High Octane" and Psygnosis' "Wipe Out". You are attempting to cross the finish line first (or at least finish in the top three), both by flying faster and out maneuvering your opponent, and by out gunning him. Through the use of both your main gun and some fire-and-forget missiles, you can accomplish the first. By nimbly negotiating turns and making intelligent use of your turbo power-ups, you can accomplish the second.

The game is very pretty to look at. With over 10 levels of texture-mapped courses (including bonus tracks), four different views from which to see them, and some fairly detailed opponent vehicles, CyberSpeed comes close to the graphic excellence of Wipe Out. At first glance, it looks like Wipe Out, plays like Wipe Out and may have you convinced

that makes this game different from the games mentioned above is the nature of the vehicle steering mechanism and circuit structure. In CyberSpeed, your vehicle, and that of your opposition, is suspended from a power cable (a la "Gyruss" ...well, sort of...). Steering becomes a little funky as your vehicle (you have eight different craft and nationalities to choose from), while it reacts according to the laws of physics, kind of breaks those laws in the way the vehicle reacts to a turn. The basic strategy is to keep as close to the power line as possible and



X-RATED



to avoid the other craft as they move in 360 degrees, centered around the line. There are three modes in the game; Free race, Season and Time Trial. In Season mode, you are able to move to the next circuit by finishing among the top three competitors and the player can save to the memory card after successfully completing a circuit. As you progress through the more difficult tracks, the game's designers throw more and more at you, including tighter curves and objects that have been placed to have you moving in circles around the power line to avoid them. It can get pretty hairy when you have just used one of your



The Bottom Line...

If you are huge a fan of this type of game however, by all means, give CyberSpeed a try. But, if you have purchased your one futuristic / hovercraft / racing / combat game for '95, there isn't enough that's new, different or exciting here to warrant the additional buy.



turbos, are absolutely FLYING down the track and are trying to avoid these impediments.

I guess the "bottom line" (as we say) with CyberSpeed is that it does most things well but not great. The most original twist to the theme is the power line idea. The graphics are good, dazzling at times. The between race commercials are very annoying and decidedly un-funny, but the music is solid and the gameplay is competitive with the other games that find themselves in this futuristic/hovercraft/racing/combat category. You probably don't need to own three and, when comparing CyberSpeed to Hi Octane and Wipe Out, it is the odd game out. If you are a huge fan of this type of game however, by all means, give CyberSpeed a try. But, if you have purchased your one futuristic/hovercraft/racing/combat game for '95, there isn't enough that's new, different or exciting here to warrant the additional buy.

D. Winding



DOOM

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAMS DEVELOPED BY ID SOFTWARE



96 AMMO 182% HEALTH 112% ARMOR



101 AMMO 60% HEALTH 53% ARMOR



98 AMMO 100% HEALTH 0% ARMOR



201% AMMO 100% HEALTH 0% ARMOR

42 AMMO 100% HEALTH 0% ARMOR

I think it's safe to assume that, unless you've recently been returned to Earth by alien abductees after being subjected to a series of experiments involving metal probes applied to your naughty bits, you know of "DOOM". You know, DOOM, the 3-D shooter in which you explore complicated levels filled with hidden areas, while using a lovely array of weapons to cause grave bodily harm to anyone foolish enough to get in your way. Two years after its initial release, it still has a huge following in the PC gaming community, and the past year has seen it converted to three video game systems: the Atari Jaguar (giggle), Sega 32X (snort), and Super NES (guffaw). Now we have Williams' "DOOM: Special PlayStation Edition", which not only does the original PC version justice, but does it one better.

The first thing you notice about DOOM: SPE is the speed. Unlike the pokey trio of previous video game versions, this sucker absolutely flies. There was no discernible (just call me Thesaurus Man) slowdown anywhere in the game. The second thing you notice are the graphics; unlike that so-so trinity of earlier ports, DOOM: SPE is identical to the PC. No chunky graphics, no black



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borders, just screen-filling eye candy. Most interesting of all, this version doesn't just have levels from the original DOOM, but levels from DOOM, DOOM II: Hell on Earth, AND the recently released Ultimate DOOM. There's apparently even a level from the upcoming Ultra 64 version.

The gameplay itself is classic DOOM, using the PS controller's array of buttons to maximum advantage. The four circular buttons make you shoot, run, strafe, and open doors; the four top buttons make you slide left or right and switch between weapons; the SELECT button calls up the level map, on which you can move around effortlessly. Four difficulty levels make sure that sucky and studly players alike receive a challenge, and passwords are awarded



134 AMMO 100% HEALTH 0% ARMOR



101 AMMO 112% HEALTH 200% ARMOR

X-RATED



after every completed level as you progress through the game.

DOOM: SPE supports two-player cooperative and competitive (a.k.a. "Deathmatch") games via the Combat Cable, and unlike the hilariously flaky multiplayer support of the Jaguar version—its manual even dedicated an entire paragraph to the all-too-frequent "network errors"—SPE works just like it's supposed to.

Graphically, DOOM: SPE is flawless. Like I said but 300 words ago, the resolution is identical to the PC original, and the graphics fill up the entire TV screen. Williams made color changes to a few areas—several rooms that were once "plain" are now tinted bright red or green—



The Bottom Line...



The verdict: Anyone who doesn't like DOOM: Special PlayStation Edition is a Communist vegetarian—and me, I love democracy and red meat. If you have one of the earlier video game versions of DOOM, donate it to charity. Better yet, sell it to a non-PS-owning friend (the poor sap) and put the proceeds toward this game. Two blood-drenched thumbs up!

93%

Z. Meston

FIFA 96

PUBLISHED BY EA SPORTS - DEVELOPED BY EA CANADA



Regardless of the huge excitement generated by the 1994 World Cup, which thrilled skinny soccer-playing weenies like myself, Americans still largely don't give a rat's fuzzy behind about the sport. Take this phone conversation I had with a friend after getting *FIFA 96* to review. Me: "Dude, I just got *FIFA 96* for PlayStation! It should be awesome! Come over and let's play!" Him: "Did you get *Madden*? When does *Madden* come out?" Well, all I have to say to football junkies like my "friend" is to free your mind, because *FIFA 96* is a wondrous sports game. (At least think of it as an excellent time killer until *Madden* comes out.)

After a super-de-duper full-motion video sequence, *FIFA 96* presents you with six options. "Friendly" is a single game with two teams; think of it as an exhibition. "League" allows you to take control of one or more teams in any of 12 international leagues, with over 3,000 real players, including all those World Cup stars whose names you've already forgotten (except for me). "Tournament" is like your very own World Cup, with 24 teams whittling themselves down to a single champion (because there can be only one). "Playoff" is similar to Tournament, only with 16 teams instead of 24. "Options" lets you mess with

various factors such as the length of each half (2 to 45 minutes), the severity of the penalty calling, and the offside rule, to name three. "Restore" lets you load in a League or Tournament in progress from a memory card.

As for the game itself, it's absolutely stuffed with features, most of them not present in the 16-bit and 3DO versions of the original *FIFA International Soccer*. There's a new "Fast Dribble" move for breakaways on the opponent's goal (although this makes the ball easier to steal), and many extra ball moves, including the short lob and the rainbow kick, which sends the ball about 800 feet into the air.

Fifty features, part two: There are seven selectable views of the action, and unlimited camera angles in the instant replay; real-time



X-RATED



commentary from veddy English commentator John Motson, who even uses the names of every one of the 22 players on the field (too bad he says "a lovely pass by such-and-so" thirty times a minute); set plays during corner kicks and throw-ins; and jersey numbers on every player. You can even control the time of day at which the game's being played, so that the players leave long shadows or no shadows at all.

Now to answer the sixty-four zillion dollar question: how does the PS version compare to the now-classic 3DO version of *FIFA*, declared by the muscleheads at Sports Illustrated as the "best sports video game ever"? PS whups 3DO handily in every category. The game-play options are more plen-

tiful, the graphics are sharper, and there's even more music. (Both versions are in Dolby Surround Sound.) It also lacks some of the gameplay flaws of the 3DO version, such as the mentally challenged goalies that dived for the ball on every freakin' shot and the goal kicks that could be curved all the way to the other end of the field.

The verdict: *FIFA 96* is, regardless of what those dweebs at SI say, the best sports video game ever, with uncanny game-play, graphics, and sound. Anyone with even a twinge of interest in soccer should take a long, lustful look at this game. I'd buy it even if I hadn't scammed a review copy, which is the highest compliment a tightwad like myself can give.

Z. Meston



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94%



JUPITER STRIKE

PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM - DEVELOPED BY TAITO



Jupiter Strike may sound like a Sega Saturn game (my lamest joke yet in Dimension PS-X—please hold your applause), but, in fact, it's a nicely done 3-D shoot-'em-up from Taito, yet another video game company having trouble making the transition from 16-bit to 32-bit systems. If you ever played the Super NES cartridge StarFox, think of Jupiter Strike as a PS update, with much of the same look and feel as that classic shooter.

Jupiter Strike puts you in the cockpit of an angular craft, called the Coleoptere (a very fruity name for a starship), flying through stage after stage of alien invaders trying to—oh, man, you're not going to believe this—take over the Earth! Your spiffy ship is armed with two types of lasers: a run-of-the-mill dual beam and a "lock-on laser" that lets you target multiple enemies and take them all out with a single shot. (You earn bonus points at the end of each stage, depending on how efficiently you killed bad guys with lock-on shots.) You can also view the action from two Ridge Racer-ish view-

points: behind and slightly above the ship or inside the cockpit. (I found certain enemies easier to kill with the different views.) Like the PS 3-D shooter, Total Eclipse Turbo, Jupiter Strike locks you into a narrow path through each stage, flying straight ahead at all times; unlike TE Turbo, you can't speed up or slow down. Finally, your ship can roll to avoid enemy lasers, although you can still smack into obstacles and debris.

Jupiter Strike doesn't have a whole lotta options. You can choose between three different control configurations and you can toggle between normal and "reverse" (airplane-style) control of the ship. That's it. There are no multiple difficulty levels and no way to alter

X-RATED



your starting number of lives or continues. (You get three of each with which to beat the game.) In my humble estimation, the difficulty level is about average—nothing too easy (particularly the bosses) and nothing too hard.

My major nit-pick, with Jupiter Strike, is that it might as well have gone all-out in “borrowing” ideas from StarFox. Why not have wingmen exchanging playful banter with you as the game progresses? Why not have multiple paths through the game? Why not have “smart bombs” that nuke everything on the screen, in a glorious flash of light and color?



The Bottom Line...

The verdict: Jupiter Strike is a fine shooter with several StarFox-like qualities, but the quintessential (oh, how I love big words) PlayStation shooter, it is not. My current vote for Big Chief PlayStation Shooter is the gorgeous and quite challenging Viewpoint, but Jupiter Strike is a solid number two. (Not THAT kind of number two, silly.)

82%



Z. Meston

CRITICOM

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY VIC TOKAI



blow (Primal Rage). Criticom's biggest deviance from other fighting games is that the characters start out only knowing a few special moves and have to "earn" additional moves by successfully beating all other characters in the one-player Tournament mode.

So, what don't I like about this game (he asks, as he activates Grumpy Mode)? Let's start with the ability to roll, which gives Criticom the same gameplay flaw as Toshinden; matches often turn into "hit-and-roll," as you swat your foe with a few blows and then keep rolling to avoid being counter-attacked. Even worse, there don't seem to be any moves in Criticom that can hit a rolling/dodging opponent, whereas Toshinden at least had a few. Flaw #2 is the lack of dif-



X-RATED



ficulty levels in the one-player mode; there's only one setting in Criticom and that seems to be "You Poor, Poor Bastard." The computer opponents effortlessly execute moves and combos while you struggle just to get in a hit. The only way I could regularly win was by using the cheap-ass hit-and-roll method. (I also had success by luring the computer player to the edge of the arena, where the "I" in the AI seemed to short-circuit, as it blundered into the void.)

My biggest complaint is that Criticom feels like a "me-too" fighting game, and I've already had more than enough of those on the 16-bit systems, thank you very much. Tekken and Toshinden broke new ground, but Criticom borrows and

steals gameplay from other titles, while adding only the "earn your moves" feature, and I find that more annoying than rewarding.

Criticom's graphics are very nice, although most of the characters are, quite frankly, too wimpy-looking and don't move as fluidly as they should. The developers certainly seem to dig full-motion video, as the disc is crammed with dozens of FMV clips presented in letterbox format—a bit disappointing compared to the full-screen FMV of other PS games. As for the sound effects, most of Criticom's sound bites are terrible—neither amusing nor catchy—and used far too much during each battle. Stop quipping and start fighting, dammit!

The verdict: Criticom is, much like the average supermodel, pretty on the outside and shallow on the inside. The gameplay just doesn't hold up to the standards set by the PlayStation's other 3-D fighters, Battle Arena Toshinden and Tekken, which have equally smashing visuals AND are more fun to play.

Z. Meston

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77%



CYBERSLED

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY NAMCO



I don't mean to sound too harsh, but while playing "Cybersled", I kept wondering how I was going to describe it in my review: "Cybersled sucks" or "Cybersled blows"? A subtle difference in wording, yes, but a rather important one to wordsmiths like myself. Seriously, folks, this conversion of Namco's own 1993 coin-op is amazingly un-entertaining. I keep wondering how the same company that's graced the PlayStation with such bitchin' fare as "Tekken" and "Ridge Racer" allowed this hunk o' dung to sneak past the folks in quality control.

If you never caught a glimpse of the coin-op, Cybersled is a 3-D drive-shooty game for one or two players. You and your opponent choose from six polygonal tanks, each with unique ratings in various categories (speed, handling, weaponry, et cetera). After selecting your vehicle, and after a much-too-long pause while the CD loads, you appear in an arena with liberally placed walls, ramps, pillars, and other stuff. Your rather simple goal is to snuff your foe with your lasers and missiles while



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avoiding getting snuffed yourself. In other words, you can't just drive up to the enemy and start shooting (unless, of course, your opponent is brain-dead); you need to duck and cover when you're being shot at, then strike your enemy while his butt is hanging in the wind. If you run low on shields or missiles, you have to scurry for one of the power-ups on the arena floor. And, um, that's about it.

So why does Cybersled so heavily lack in the fun department? The dull and repetitive gameplay, of course. Driving and shooting are fun by themselves, and can be VERY fun together, but Cybersled's tiny arenas don't allow for enough driving shenanigans, and the visually unimpressive weapons aren't fun to shoot. How many times must I say it, people: If you're gonna make a game where you spend the majority of your time shooting, make sure the weapons are pretty to look at! Not even Cybersled's two-player mode (which doesn't use the Combat Cable) is much fun, and almost every game in the history of Earth is more fun with two players.

Cybersled has two graphic modes: Original, which simulates the coin-op's



X-RATED



plain-Jane polygon graphics, and Real, which throws in texture-mapping and additional colors. Problem is, both modes are surprisingly drab and dull, hardly the eye candy that the PS can dish out.

As for the
music it



The Bottom Line...

The verdict: *Cybersled* is a poor conversion of an average arcade game. Everything about it lacks, from the so-so graphics to the annoyingly long loading times to the extremely dull gameplay. Definitely one of the few truly bad PlayStation games to date. (Although I must admit that the CD makes a fine beverage coaster.)



Z. Mestom

SPACE GRIFFON VF-9

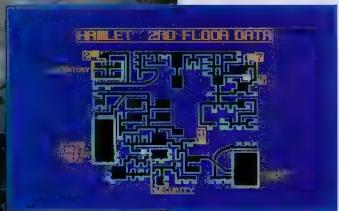
PUBLISHED BY ATLUS - DEVELOPED BY PANTHER

Atlus's "Space Griffon VF-9" is a decent game looking for a way out of the cheesy, B-movie story and annoying, obtrusive voice-overs that threaten to bring the title to its knees. The "plot" finds you, as the "Kid" (no big points for originality here), dropped into the middle of moonbase "Hamlet", with five other highly trained "specialists". It seems that your team of six has been sent by the A-Max Factory Corporation to deal with the alien invaders that have overrun the Hamlet. You make use of your high-tech armor in this battle and move deep within the core of the Hamlet's below grade facilities, seeking to put an end to this invasion.

The gameplay in Space Griffon is centered around a real-time 3D environment in a series of corridors. The play techniques required are a combination of first-person shooting and basic puzzle solving. Your progression in the game is essentially linear in that you follow the direction of your "boss" and the rest of the crew, execute the instructions that you are given and



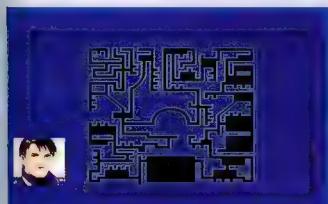
move on to the next floor. There are computers to be hooked into, key cards to be found and maps to be acquired. In fact, one of my main complaints with the title is the nature of entering pass codes to open some passageways. You walk up to the terminal and are given a choice between three different codes to enter. By trial and error, you will succeed. Fine, I can handle this, not very imaginative but I've played worse. The really annoying thing is, however, that you can't just log on to the terminal once and try the different codes. You must physically back away from the terminal and then move toward it again, each time hearing the voice of the Kid as he lets you know that you



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VARIABLE FORMULA	
GRIFFON	
Pilot	James Billings
Height	1.40m
Weight	8.27t
Speed	150km/h
Class	2
Movement	Power : 1400
Energy-Gun Power	0
Defense	Power : 1800



need to crack the code ... again, and again, and again. The other annoying aspect of the game is that you are constantly interrupted by the other team members as they talk back and forth and tell you what's going on in their little part of the Hamlet. Sometimes the information is useful, but most of the time it's just irritating.

On the positive side, the 3D environment is pretty well done. The wall, floor and ceiling textures are bright and detailed and, when in Cruise mode (more about that later), the environment scrolls by at a pretty good clip. The alien objects are pretty bland and lifeless, but the overall

presentation of the game is solid. I also enjoyed having the ability to toggle between Combat, Assault and Cruise modes, the main difference between them being weapon access, armor strength and speed of the unit. In addition, there are weapon power-ups to be found in the different "closets" that dot the Hamlet's landscape, as well as Power Units, Armor Units and Repair Units - that help you to regain health and shield strength.

When all is said and done, there are some nice features in Space Griffon, but not enough to warrant purchase. The game ends up being too simple and too linear to retain your interest for very long and the voice-overs prove too annoying and take away that last impulse to "hang with the game". For my money, our cover game, Defcon 5, is the must-buy in this category. If you feel the need to take a look at Space Griffon...take a rent, and keep the big money tucked safely inside your wallet.

D. Winding



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GEX

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS



With the release of Gex, Crystal Dynamics has now converted nearly every bleedin' one of their 3DO games (save the rather dated driving/shooting game, "Crash 'N Burn" and the amazing "Slam & Jam") to Sony's wondrous game machine. If you missed the mega-popular 3DO version (which has apparently shipped an impressive quarter-million units), Gex is a side-scrolling platform game starring a wisecracking gecko as the hero. Being quite the talented lizard, Gex doesn't just run and jump like certain other side-scrolling stars; he sticks to walls, cracks his tail to kill bad guys, and gobbles power-ups with a tongue of Gene Simmons-esque proportions. (That's a KISS reference, for those of you not musically trapped in the '70s, like myself.)

The game's storyline pits Gex against the evil Rez, master of the Media Dimension. He's sucked Gex into his TV world and the only way for Gex to escape is to find remote controls stashed throughout the game's six worlds and couple dozen levels. Naturally, gathering the remotes is made difficult by the hordes of Rez's denizens populating each level. The grave-

yard stage, for example, is filled with Frankenstein rejects and chainsaw-wielding maniacs, while the jungle stage has an abundance of frisky piranhas and gorillas hairier than Howard Stern's rear end.

Like any good platform game, Gex is teeming with secrets both big and small, so that you play each level a zillion times over to make sure you've found everything. The biggest secret of all is the hidden world of Planet X, which can't be uncovered until you've found pieces of its remote in the five normal worlds. Planet X has eight extremely challenging levels—harder by far than anything else in the game—and you earn a truly awesome ending sequence if you beat all the levels before beating Rez and winning the game. The reason I'm spoiling the secret of Planet X is that, if you don't know about it, Gex seems quite like a short game.

My only complaint with the PS version of Gex is that it's identical in every way to the 3DO original, except for the noticeably smoother gameplay speed on the PS. This wouldn't be quite so disappointing if I hadn't read TWO separate interviews with Crystal Dynamics folks in which they talked about planned additions to the PlayStation version, such as



X-RATED



new sound bites and extra levels. (Keep in mind the 3DO version was rushed to market and didn't have as many levels as originally planned.) The one and only new feature is that the game now gives you a password when you



The Bottom Line...

The verdict: Gex is an excellent platform game that, unfortunately, has barely been enhanced for the PlayStation. If you have already played Gex on the 3DO, there's absolutely no reason to buy the PS version; if the PlayStation is your first 32-bit machine, Gex makes for a very enjoyable (but slightly short-lived) side-scroll-a-rama.

90%



Z. Meston

ZOOOP

PUBLISHED BY VIACOM - DEVELOPED BY HOOKSTONE

Viacom NewMedia has a funky new puzzle game that is now appearing on every conceivable hardware platform known to man (or woman for that matter), Zoop. (They also have a Beavis and Butt-head game on the market ... talk about your diverse demographics!) The PlayStation version (released, in the box) was dropped on us this past week, so we booted it up and gave it a spin.

The objective, in Zoop, is amazingly simple, yet extremely challenging. Wacky colored shapes randomly appear along a grid 18 columns wide and 14 columns long, then migrate ever so slowly, at first, toward the center square where your little triangle is positioned. It's up to you to eliminate said shapes, by flinging your triangle at them before they enter the center square. Sounds easy? Here's the catch: if you fire at and strike a shape that is the same color as yours, no problema, it's eliminated — hasta la vista baby. But, if you strike a shape that is of a different color, your triangle exchanges colors with that shape and the other remains on the grid (doh!). If you can successfully eliminate the indicated required



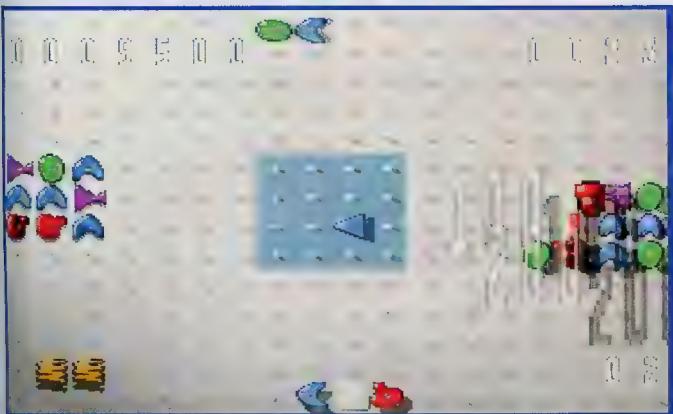
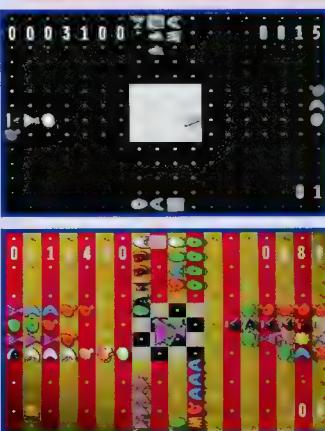
number of shapes, you will move on to the next level where you get to do it all over again but at an even faster pace. If the shapes make it into your center square, it's game over man! To make things a little more spicy, Viacom has added "Opti-Challenge" backgrounds or multicolored backgrounds which vary from level to level. These backgrounds, in essence, increase the complexity of the game by subtly tricking your eyes into believing that the color of a shape is one way when it's truly not. Talk about a headache THIS big!

It's obvious that Viacom was hoping for the next "Tetris" and, while they have achieved a mildly fun and entertaining puzzler, it doesn't have the same level of pure addictive challenge that makes you want to play it over and over again which was the center of Tetris' world wide success. Graphically, there is nothing objectionable about Zoop. The game has an Art Deco quality to it and, for a puzzle game, the graphics are pretty good...so good, in fact, that Zoop has brought tears to our eyes ... literally.

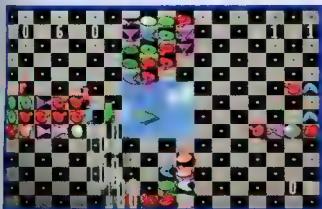
In one of the decidedly more odd occurrences that we have yet to experience within the walls of DP, Inc., we have



X-RATED



found that playing Zoop for an extended period of time has caused three of our editors' eyes to well-up with tears. Admittedly, we get very emotional about the world of PlayStation gaming, but this was a little over the top.



The Bottom Line...

Once I stopped bawling, I was left with a game that is just, well ... boring. I now have Zoop as part of my PlayStation collection but I don't see myself ever playing it again. It isn't that the people at Viacom didn't attempt to do something different within the falling (or dropping) object gaming category; but, if you're going to be successful with a falling object game, you've got to beat the king of the mountain ... the king is still safe.



T. Lindquist

POWER INSTINCT 2

ATLUS • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Atlus' "Power Instinct 2" is a sequel to their somewhat popular arcade fighter - Power Instinct, part one, of course. Similar in style to that of Capcom's "Street Fighter" series or Data East's "Fighter's History", Power Instinct 2 gives you a host of selectable characters duking it out mano-a-mano against a variety of different backdrops and locales. Each character comes equipped with his/her/its own set of special moves, executed by different pad and button combinations as well as the ability to morph into a second character during gameplay. One of the first things you'll notice about the game (other than the fact it has plenty of gratuitous booty shots), is that it's goofy as hell. And when I say goofy, I mean really goofy. There's all sorts of big-eyed Japanese anime characters with huge breasts and skimpy outfits, as well as funky music, complete with high-pitched female singers crooning Japanese lyrics. Although the game play isn't bad, the graphics are extremely lackluster, looking more like a first generation SNES title than a 32bit PlayStation game. Atlus hasn't confirmed, yet, if they will be releasing Power Instinct 2 for the PlayStation here in the U.S.; but, my bet is that they probably won't any time soon.



X-PORT

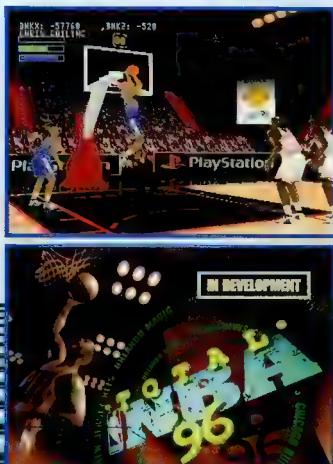
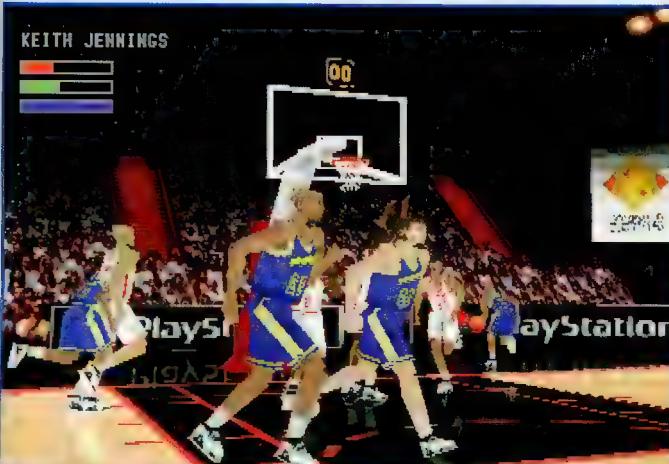
TOTAL NBA '96

SCE EUROPE • AVAILABLE SPRING '96 • EUROPE

SCE Europe's "Total NBA '96" (this is a working title and will not be used in the American release), according to our European sources, exists as little more than a technology demo at this point in time...but what a demo it is! Combining the PlayStation's high-resolution mode with seamless, polygon-based, player animation, Total NBA is absolutely breathtaking. The playing surface is at once reflective and extremely realistic, and allows for transparent reflections of the players in the floor. The court can be viewed from any angle and, because

the players are made of polygons with minimum texture mapping, there is no loss of resolution as you move closer to the action. Sony Interactive Sports is looking at releasing this title in America next spring and, as with GameDay and Face Off, they are deter-

mined to deliver gameplay and unparalleled realism to match the game's graphic brilliance. Look for more information over the coming months in X-Pecting.



EXECTOR

ARC SYSTEM WORKS • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Continuing Japan's regard for huge, battle-mech style robots comes "Exector", a new multi-perspective shooter, designed and developed by ARC System Works Co., Ltd. Looking a bit similar in perspective to Interplay's "Loaded", but playing nothing like it, Exector has you taking control of your mech and infiltrating the enemy's futuristic space stations on basic search and destroy missions. Your mech has a powerful array of weaponry at its disposal, ranging from homing missiles and lasers to plasma bombs, as well as the ability to hover and skim along surfaces at fast speeds. There really isn't anything special about this import shooter, with the most notable feature being the ability to change your perspective and camera angles on the fly from first person to third and anywhere in between. The graphics are suitably dark and futuristic; although, there is a ton of polygon breakup during play and the music is just average at its best. If you're still interested, don't get your hopes up too high, as there are no plans at this time for an American release and, most likely, there never will be.



EXECTOR

THUNDERSTORM ROAD AVENGER

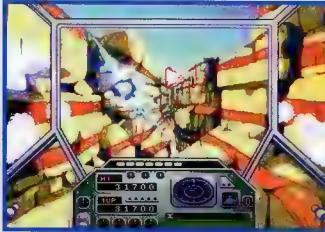
ECSECO • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Invoking memories of days, thankfully, gone by, a Japanese company by the name of Ecseco Development has translated two Sega CD titles for the PlayStation, "Thunderstorm" and "Road Blaster", (in America, they were titled Cobra Command and Road Avenger and were published by the now-defunct Renovation) and packaged them together in a two-CD combo case. These titles, in turn, were originally Japanese Laser-Disc arcade games, released during the brief LD coin-op explosion in the mid-eighties, and boy does it show. Thunderstorm has you taking to the skies in a heavily armored attack chopper with your primary objective: aim cursor and shoot car-

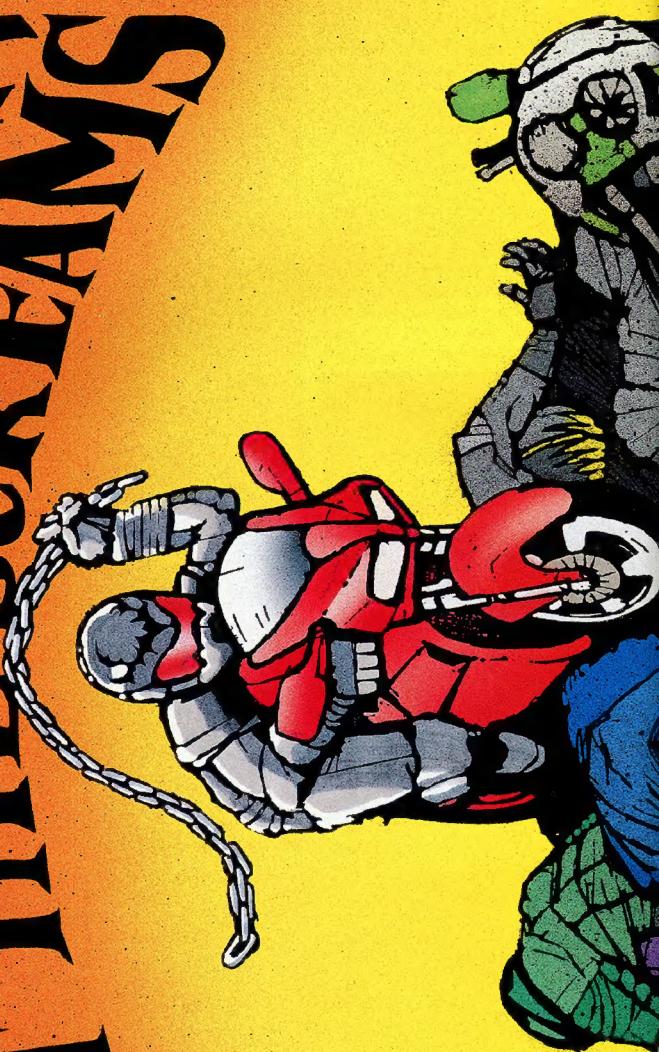


toon. In all honesty, this game looks extremely dated, by today's technical standards, and the animation has an old, Speed Racer-ish look to it. In Road Blaster, you are in control of a souped-up hot rod looking to avenge your wife's death. In this game, you watch the cartoon and push left or right and brake or turbo when the

game tells you to do so. Both titles include the original arcade versions, as well as new PlayStation versions with improved border graphics. Don't expect to see these titles show up on our shores ever and that's a good thing.



WE PROVIDED THE
WISDOM TO DROWN
OUR DREAMS
WE PROVIDED
THE
WISDOM
TO
WILT
YOU

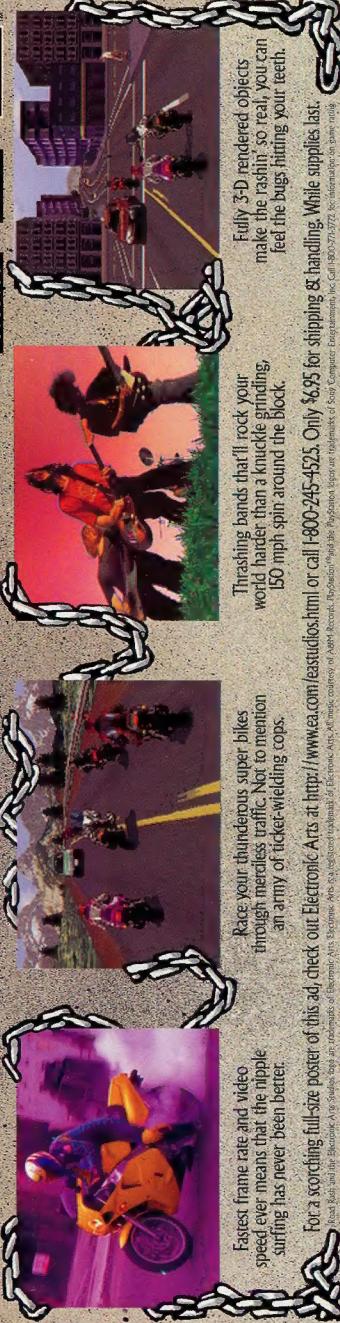


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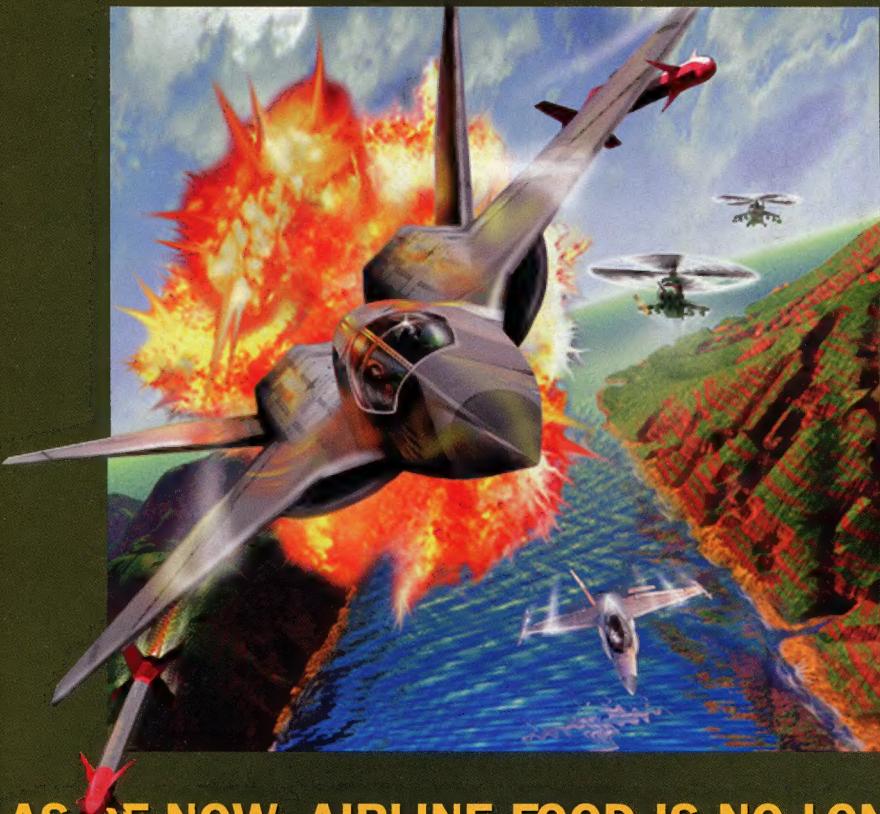
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